273 183 [689] All of these performances fall within the range of acceptable, though perhaps imperfect, behavior for drunken men; that is, while some of them are considered deplorable and others dangerous, sanctions are usually limited to scolding and the conflict does not persist beyond the drinking situation.

On the other hand, the drunken man may be insulting or physically aggressive, and while these performances may be discounted on occasion, they often bring the individual into conflict which persists beyond the particular drinking situation. For the purposes of this description, we will define the conflict focus as that state which exists when an individual perceives his control over resources to be temporarily placed in increased jeopardy by circumstances some portion of which can be attributed to the action (or failure to take action) of some other individual; the jeopardized party must also perceive that there exists some form of action he can take (some remedy) in relation to the individual "causing" the conflict which will decrease his feeling of vulnerability.

273 578 Both insults and physical aggression by drunken individuals are verbally proscribed and often physically sanctioned. Aurelia Ramirez, speaking of the drunken insults of a relative who has been living in her house, says:

[539] PURA XC'AB YA YAL TU*L YA YAX YAKUBEL.

He talks of nothing but witchcraft when he is drunk.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

shortly before the fiesta of the saint's day with which he was charged. When the nomination was made, the president sent out the first policeman with the chief policeman to bring the man chosen to the town hall. They expected, and were always confronted with, resistance to the nomination. In order to gain acceptance they got the nominee drunk in a drinking session at the town hall. Liquor was measured out, and all the officials drank only a half cup at each round, but the new alférez was required to drink a full cup. The rounds continued until the new alférez was drunk. If he did not accept at this session, he was put in jail to think it over. Another drinking session took place the following day.

Nomination to the post of alférez was the only situation in which the jail penalty has been brought into effect, since refusal by nominees to other posts simply means that the officials "look for someone else." The reason given for invoking the punishment was "we know he has the wealth and therefore he should serve." Until 1965 the town had always succeeded in recruiting two of the alfereces from Ahk'olnantik and two from Alannantik. Since the upper division of Ahk'olnantik has grown at a more rapid rate than the lower division, candidates were found only in Ahk'olnantik. This unbalancing of the population ratios undermined the institution of alférez, which had always been the most unpopular position. When I returned to the field in 1967, it had been eliminated.

The Functions of Civil Officials

An analysis of the formally prescribed functions of the civil officials must take into account three sources of data: the functions as prescribed by state legislation, the functions as understood by local officials, and the observed activities of the officials. Table 26 compares the functions of officials as stated in the constitution of the state of Chiapas (Secretaría del Gobierno Departmental de Chiapas, 1828: Decreto 52, Nov. 30, 1825) [3] to statements of informants and to my observations of the carrying out of their official obligations.

3. I have chosen this constitution as the first post-independence statement of the status of local civil administrators.